

# Mobile Diving at

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**M**ORE often than not, their efforts go unseen, below the surface. But the movie "Men of Honor," which debuted last week, may have shed some light on Mobile Diving Salvage Unit One (MDSU-1), its Sailors and their daily jobs.

MDSU-1 calls Pearl Harbor home, but is ready to deploy whenever called upon. The unit serves several functions, but according to Chief Boatswain's Mate(SW/DV) Christopher Lehner, the key to the unit's success is found in the first word of its name - mobile.

"We do a lot of things, and we have to do them all anywhere in the world. It's not easy, that's why we train so much," Lehner said.

#### Preparation for a dive

It can take divers several hours to prepare for one day of diving, not to mention the time it takes to prepare for each individual dive. Even after a dive, depending of the depth of the dive, divers still require assistance.

"You have a couple of minutes to get them out of their suits and into the chamber before they feel any of the effects," Lehner explained. "I've seen hundreds of dives and preparation can make the difference in preventing injuries."

The hours of tedious and deliberate work has paid off for the divers who share an exemplary track record of success.

But the divers are not the only ones that learn from the exercises. For the past few weeks, Lt. Cmdr. Ross Mitchell has been studying MDSU-1's exercises. Mitchell, who is on his way to Sasebo, Japan to take command of the rescue and salvage ship USS Safeguard (ARS 50), is visiting MDSU-1 to learn what the unit may be doing on his ship. That could run the gamut between underwater ship's husbandry, construction, salvage, demolition, saturation, research, hyperbaric medicine, and training - all are responsibilities of today's Navy divers.

"You really learn a lot from just being around them. I can't imagine doing what they do everyday. It is not easy work," said Mitchell.

During training exercises, divers sometimes role-play neurological injuries suffered from diving. According to Chief Machinist's Mate(SW/DV/PJ) Duane Clark, every aspect of diving must be understood not only to succeed, but to survive.

"Everyone rotates positions during the exercises, which are aimed at training and evaluating dive supervisors," said Clark. "It helps each diver prepare for a job they might not like exercising."

It is important to also realize that the senior diver makes the decisions. An E-7 "master" diver out ranks an E-9 "first" class diver. In the diving community, the senior diver is determined by the diving qualification not by rank.

#### Master Diver

Recently, MDSU-1 geared its training exercises at divers going up for "master" diver, the highest diving accreditation given - two of the unit's divers are preparing for that certification.

"I'm really looking forward to it (master diver evaluation)," said Senior Chief Hull Technician(DV) William Crider. "Exercises

like these help. They put focus on things that you might otherwise neglect."

Crider, who will soon head to Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center (NDSTC), Panama City, Fla. to attempt to qualify for "master" diver, will undergo a thorough examination of his diving skills during practical exercises.

"One mistake can ruin a day and one bad day can ruin the whole evaluation," Crider explained of the process which touts a high attrition rate for divers. "I've practiced everything I can. All I can do now is hope for the best and score perfect."

"Master" diver is a 10-day course at NDSTC which evaluates qualified first-class divers and saturation divers, E-7 or above, to determine the candidates ability to successfully perform as diving supervisors in all facets of Navy diving.

Besides "master" diver, there are two other diving qualifications. The "first class" diver's course is designed to provide "second class" divers with the training necessary to perform operational air as a diving team member and to understand the responsibilities and duties of a diving supervisor. The course also covers advanced diving physics and medicine, dive system certification, planning for all surface supplied diving operations, open circuit scuba and all hyperbaric chamber operations.

The "second class" diver course provides basic training in surface-supplied air and scuba diving techniques, underwater repair, salvage, and search procedures. The course also covers the basics of diving physics and medicine, scuba, surface supported diving systems, underwater tools and work techniques, and underwater cutting and welding procedures. Second class divers are qualified to a depth of 190 feet.

More Than a Movie  
More than 100 divers from commands throughout Pearl Harbor saw the debut of the movie "Men of Honor" Nov. 10. They showed up at the Dole Cannery Theatre in their command tee shirts.

The movie details the trials and tribulations of Carl Brashear, the first black Navy diver. Today the Navy is an example of equality, but as the movie demonstrates this was not always the case.

In February 1948, Brashear joined the Navy in the only rate allowed to blacks at the time - a steward. Brashear did not accept the limitations put upon him and requested training to become a diver. His request was denied, but he persisted, and the rest is history.

Although the movie focuses on Brashear, it also shows the history and honor of the Navy diving program. Without giving too much away from the movie, it does history and the Navy proud.

A little Hawaii diving history  
During World War II, Navy divers played an immeasurable role after the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. The raid began just before 8 a.m. on Dec. 7, 1941. Later that morning Navy divers found themselves cutting through the hull of the overturned battleship USS Oklahoma to rescue trapped sailors.

Teams of divers were put to work recovering ammunition from the magazines of sunken ships, to be ready in the event of a second attack. The salvage effort at Pearl Harbor was very successful and helped prepare the Pacific for the long war.



MDSU-1 divers are lifted out of the water while the rest of the diving team pulls the 'stage' onto the deck (T-ATF-171) recently.

EN1(DV) Gregory J. Lee checks the a MK-21 helmet during pre-dive setups before entering the waters off the coast of Pearl Harbor during training exercises recently aboard the USNS Sioux (T-ATF-171).



MDSU-1 divers stand on the 'stage' preparing to be hoisted over the side of USNS Sioux (T-ATF-171) to conduct a deep sea dive off the coast of Pearl Harbor for training.



EN1(DV) Gregory J. Lee checks the a MK-21 helmet during pre-dive setups before entering the waters off the coast of Pearl Harbor during training exercises recently aboard the USNS Sioux (T-ATF-171).